



City of Seattle

Mayor Jenny A. Durkan

September 16, 2019

Dear Ms. Raman:

Thank you for reaching out to Mayor Jenny Durkan regarding our ongoing work to ensure our rideshare drivers have the support and protections they need to build a better life for themselves and their loved ones. The Mayor is appreciative of our office's ongoing conversations with Lyft, and she hopes we can continue our dialogue and work together to address our region's biggest challenges.

The Mayor has been working to create new worker protections and standards for workers in emerging industries – similar to her work to provide protections to some of our most vulnerable population like domestic workers. As you know, many gig workers are considered independent contractors and as such, app-based businesses require cities and/or states to approach minimum compensation standards and benefits different than traditional employers.

Cities like Seattle are becoming the new safety net, so we must ensure adequate wages and benefits for all workers. Seattle is a national leader in ensuring our workers are treated fairly. From the Fight for \$15 to our Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, we are a city that puts our workers first, including our drivers.

As you know, the City of Seattle has been working on a series of proposals guided by a set of key principals that reflect Seattle's values:

- Ensuring rideshare drivers providing services in Seattle make minimum wage plus compensation for reasonable expenses incurred that benefit your company;
- Ensuring drivers have access to reasonable benefits including paid sick and safe time, workers compensation, or unemployment insurance that would be available to employees;
- Protection and representation for drivers to address unwarranted deactivation issues; and
- A modest tax at similar levels proposed and implemented in other cities across the country to support workers and key investments in transit and affordability in Seattle.

There's no doubt that Lyft's explosive growth has helped enrich many, and has helped create opportunity for many communities throughout our region. But the fact remains that some drivers are in fact not receiving minimum compensation, especially after expenses, and that this growth has had an impact on Seattle communities. Last year, Uber and Lyft had 24 million rides in the City of Seattle, half of which either started or ended downtown. Uber and Lyft vehicles depend on the City's right of way, take valuable curb space, and [contribute to congestion and climate burden](#) by circling or idling downtown.

When Lyft went public in March of this year, the company was valued at \$28.3 billion, and the company has committed at least \$30 million towards a referendum in California. We appreciate your support for a modest tax increase, as we believe our approach is balanced, and will have little impact on drivers or your business model while creating a significant positive impact for drivers and our community.

Since taking office, Mayor Durkan has made it her commitment to ensure Seattle is a city where all our workers are treated fairly, families can afford to live near where they work, and everyone, regardless of income, has access to high-quality transit. We also want to sustain innovation and the most vibrant economy in the country. It is our strong hope that Lyft will stand in support with the City as the Mayor finalizes her proposal.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Formas
Office of the Mayor of Seattle